137 241 The savanna of the hinterland beyond the left bank of the river is bounded on the north by this huge forest, in which many generations of Tapirapé Indians have found enough virgin growth to prepare annually new plots that provide them with an abundance of bananas, maize, peanuts, gourds, beans, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes, peppers, tobacco, and cotton. This forest, aside from being flooded 193 312 226 extensively even in the dry season, contains small streams flowing on wide beds of clear sand, which offer the Indians cool, limpid water for drinking and bathing, and abundant fish, large and small, that play an important part in their diet.

487 The only man-made trails that we know of so far in the vicinity of the Tapirapé River are the more or less deeply marked footpaths of the Tapirapé Indians. On the savanna, they are about 20 centimeters wide and follow the sinuous line involuntarily produced by human beings when they walk on flat ground. [97:51] We can verify this sinuosity, for example, on a long beach, when we attempt to reach a certain point directly and later look at the trail left by our feet. We notice that it meanders and thus differs from all animal tracks, those of the jaguar or water cavy as well as those of birds, which always run in a straight line unless they curve out deliberately.

114 133 To give an idea of a specific part of the river environs at a specific time of year, I shall now describe my land journey toward the north, from Porto Salvação to Tampetáma. I left on June 19, 1935, at 3:30 in the afternoon, carrying on my back the requisite sleeping and eating equipment. I walked at the rapid pace used by the local frontiersmen on long hikes, making about five kilometers an hour on flat, unobstructed ground. I went through dry grassland with a scatter- [137] ing of medium-sized trees which sometimes stood dozens of meters apart. After a walk of nearly three hours, I reached Lake Tucunaré, [103] so called because of its abundant fish of the same name which attract [136] the Tapirapé Indians to the place every year. At the time of my passage, Lake Tucunaré was a slow and deep brook which I had to cross up to my waist in water. They say that it connects with the Tapirapé River during the rainy season. It is surrounded by trees, and the water is full of them. After wading through it, I reached a place on the shore where those Indians often set up their sleeping hammocks and where I spent the night. There were quite a few mosquitoes. The [136] chief plague of the day, however, in spite of my deliberately late [132] start, was the heat.

I left at 6:30 the following morning. Everything was wet with dew. I skated over a stretch of black earth, damp and slippery ("soap"). I saw jaguar tracks. At eight o'clock, I reached a flooded forest strip which I had to ford. The same thing happened after walking another ten minutes. At ten o'clock I reached a traditional Tapirapé resting place located in a small patch of forest which contains fresh water. I rested there until four in the afternoon, and then set out again and waded through a swampy area. At 5:30 I reached dry scrub land where I was able to set up camp for the night. Before going to sleep, I heard frequent jaguar calls.

When I awoke on the twenty-first my clothes were soaked through with dew. I set out at six o'clock. Half an hour later, I was lost in a large and swampy muriti grove. At seven o'clock I reached dry scrub land, and at 9:15 the great forest. During the first 15 minutes of walking, the ground of the forest was more or less dry, but after that it became completely flooded. I walked for an hour and a half in water, which flowed in several places. At 11:30 [97:52] I found manioc in a brook. I then crossed four gardens separated from each other by strips of forest. At a quarter before one, I met four youths of the Tapirapé tribe, and half an hour later, still walking through the immense forest, I spotted in its midst the village of these Indians.

When I returned from the village to Porto Salvação on August 5 of the same year, I made the whole trip in a single day. I left at dawn with a Tapirapé youth. Although these Indians, as a rule, walk a little more slowly than the local Brazilian frontiersmen, their pace is still quite rapid and very even so that they proceed at the same speed through forest and grassland, and since they hardly stop to rest in the daytime, they may walk 40 or 50 kilometers a day.

On the way back, we took a different course through the forest. The area we had gone through on the way out was still flooded. We walked on ground that was quite dry, making a wide curve to the west. We reached the grassland within two hours. In many areas the Indians had already burned the grass, and our feet and legs were free of that hindering growth which adds so much to the traveler's weariness. Once in a while, a fresh breeze blew upon us. We walked four hours through open grassland and scrub forest, with frequent glimpses of pairs of deer, until we reached the traditional Tapirapé resting place in the small patch of forest containing fresh water. There we found Reverend Kegel

4: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940) 1943
SP22 Tapirape SP22

INTRODUCTION

The Tapirapé Indians are a Tupí-speaking tribe living in Central Brazil west of the Araguaya River. Their villages formerly extended some two hundred miles to the north of the Tapirapé River, an affluent of the Araguaya; but today their one remaining village lies west of the Araguaya, about forty miles north of the Tapirapé and 160 miles from the point of union of the two rivers. This settlement contains a total population that does not exceed 150 people, the residue of five villages that probably existed so late as the turn of the century and that are said to have had a population of about two hundred people each. A progressive population decline has followed the acquiring of diseases from contact with the neighboring Carajá Indians of the Araguaya River and from European visitors. Such contacts, however, have left their aboriginal culture little changed.

The Tapirapé are properly a forest people, maintaining an agricultural life on clearings hewed from the great tropical forest. Their cultivated fields are large producing manioc (both *Manihot manihot* and the sweet species *Manihot palmata aypi*), maize, pumpkins, beans, peppers, yams, kará (*Dioscorea* sp.), cotton, and bananas.

The dry months of June through September of each year are devoted to clearing the garden sites. This work is done by men, frequently working individually, sometimes in communal labor formed by the men's society groups (1). When the clearing is done collectively, the large field is divided into individual plots which become individual property;

(1) There is an excellent description of this communal activity, called *ajutorio* by the Tapirapé in Herbert Baldus. 1937. "Os grupos de comer e os grupos de trabalho dos Tapirapé", *in Boletim de Etnologia Brasileira*, pp. 98-111. São Paulo.

[p. 61]
[p. 60 blank]

264 574 476 [262] [92] At sundown of the following day, large pots and plates of various foods were carried to the dancing plaza and placed in six sets. These sets tallied with the eating groups. The Kaunanõ', owing to their small numbers, had joined the Awainkĩ to form a single group. All those who could do so brought something to eat for their group. There were bananas, peanuts, peanut flour, boiled fish, fish sauce and manioc flour spiced with peppers, several varieties of karã [Tr., a kind of yam], peanut kanĩ, etc. Before that, there was a great distribution of gifts. Each individual offered those people for whom he had special liking or esteem part of his precious possessions, such as beads and similar things. The chiefs received the greater part of this. One man had received three pairs of scissors and found no better use for them than to wear them as pendant ornaments.

431 574 [622] [177]

264 476 574 [554] 123 Later, the eating groups sat around their pots. Beside them lay the ashes of burnt-out fires. The members of each group squatted together, men, women and children, and ate of everything as they pleased. Kamairahó, the principal leader, got the best piece, a chunk of chicken, and with his usual courtesy shared it with me, his brother. We called each other "Txankanépéra," and Ampitánya, his little adoptive daughter who sat between us, shouted to me, "Ané Txankanépéra," and I called her by the same terms. The people in the other groups also called me "Txankanépéra," and I called them by the name of their group. We were all in very high spirits.

[597]

264 574 [93] All the participants in this feast sat so close together that there were no spaces whatever between the groups.

535 [776] Within a quarter of an hour, everything had been eaten. The pots and plates were removed, and the people scattered. Night came. The plaza was taken over by the masked dancers. They represented "the good shadows" [spirits]. All the "evil shadows" had taken kauihó and vanished. The bad rainy weather, with its attendant hunger and illness, the "winter" of northern Brazil, was over. Now began the dry season with its "good shadows," summer.

132

574 796 They say that at the time of the harvest, around September, they also hold one of these common banquets for all the eating groups.

224 264 476 574 [462] On July 15 I had the opportunity to watch the tatãupũa of an eating group. On the previous day, a man of the Awainkĩ had killed with a club a wild pig brought to bay by the dogs. The task of roasting the meat at home fell to the women belonging to this eating group. In payment for this work they were allowed to keep at home certain parts

[Ed., pp. 87-88 are not translated.]

000 [89] In Mühlmann (p. 344) we read: "In Polynesia, the new year was reckoned from the beginning of the fishing season, and since this period of time coincided with the appearance of the Pleiades above the horizon, a fruitful half-year, mata-ii'i-i-nia, that is, 'Pleiades above,' was distinguished from an unfruitful or less fruitful half-year, mata-ii'i-i-raro, that is, 'Pleiades below.' A Pleiadic year was also known in India."

2 It is also worth mentioning Métraux's observation (p. 51) that the Pleiades seem to have been the object of special beliefs among the Tupinambá, who were convinced, according to an unpublished manuscript by Thevet, that they fostered the growth of manioc, the staple of their diet. One of the most beautiful legends of the Taulipáng, a Karaíb [Carib] tribe of the Roroima, relates how the Pleiades came to the sky and also mentions their function as heralds of the rainy season that brings an abundance of food with the appearance of shoals of fish moving upstream to spawn (Koch-Grünberg, p. 13).

805 Among the Tapirapé, I did not find anything corresponding to this Indian and Polynesian culture trait [Tr., the Tapirapé do lend importance to the Pleiades]. It is true that of all the events in the yearly cycle, the rainy season is of greatest interest to these Indians. They did not tell me anything about the Pleiades, however. The rainy season is to them the opposite of what it is to the Taulipáng, namely, not the time of well-being, but, in the words of the Tapirapé, the time of evil shadows, of baleful spirits. It is characteristic of the timid nature of these Tupí Indians that they lend greatest [141] importance to the time of greatest distress, instead of centering their [221] thoughts on the dry season, which is to them the pleasant time of [132] abundant vegetable and animal foods and thus the time of health and pleasure in being alive. [Ed., the last two paragraphs on p. 89 and the first paragraph, as well as the first three sentences of the second paragraph, on p. 90 are omitted.]

[90] The Tapirapé could not tell me the number of days in the 821 lunar month, although they were familiar with the moon cycle and 192 called the new moon txãhi apát, "moon sleeps," or txãhi ãnanxím, "moon finished," and the full moon ãuvabó, bo being the augmentative suffix, and ãuva corresponding probably to the ãu, "lunar," listed by Montoya, and the yacy icúua, "full, fat moon," given by Stradelli. The first quarter, when the visible part is not yet very thick, is called

9: Wagley E-5 (1939) 1940SP22 Tapirapé SP22

but lives and re-lives his life cycle as the cycle of the seasons. In the early rains of October to January, Petura is a small boy. During the heavy rains of January to March, he is an adolescent youth. He is a young warrior as the rains diminish in April to June, and as the year draws to its close for the Tapirapé during the remaining dry months, Petura becomes old. Then as the year begins again with the first refreshing rains of October, he begins a new life cycle. This is the agricultural year for the Tapirapé. They plant when he is young (October) and harvest as he matures (in May and June).

Petura was not the only hero who benefited the Tapirapé. To the "house of the gods" travelled Tomatsiri and Mukwura II, other ancestor heroes, in search of their father Mukwura. There Mukwura gave his son, Tomatsiri, the bow and arrow which he brought back to the Tapirapé. There, too—and this is typical of Tapirapé readjustment to newly-learned knowledge—the younger brother Mukwura II was given fire arms which he transmitted to his descendants, the Europeans or Toré.[9]

Shamans are equated with these ancestor heroes. If shamans die a non-violent death, they go immediately to Maraawa where they live plentifully supplied with food, tobacco, and all aids to the good life. If they die violently, however (i.e., are suspected of sorcery and killed by the Tapirapé) they go to another home of shamans in the west. This is the "house of the winds" where the heavy winds blowing from the southwest come during the late dry season. They are given an artificial face, and they stay here until they heal before going east to join their companions in Maraawa. Only shamans and culture heroes continue after life in the form that they had on earth.

It is chiefly through shamans that the Tapirapé know of the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies. A shaman had seen the sun "close by." The sun, he said, is an old man with no hair on his head. He travels through the heavens wearing a large head-dress of red parrot feathers, and since red parrot feathers are "hot," the head-dress gives off heat. Each night, after limping through his daily orbit (for the "sky is rough" and the sun continually has thorns in his feet) he returns underground to the east to his house at Maraawa.[10] There he eats very little and in a short time sets out again. The morning after Wamaamma, a shaman, had died, several Tapirapé saw that the sun was red; it was very "hot" and angry because a shaman had died.

As the sun is male, so the moon is female. Both are thought of as people,

[9] I was unable to get the original of this story before the chronic change was made to make it fit with new conditions. It is similar, however, to a Tapanambu story recorded by Thevet and quoted by Métraux (*ibid.*, p. 121), which tells of Arawete and Tamandaré, twin sons of Sunnury.

[10] See Métraux, *ibid.*, p. 64, for Sipaia version.

12: Wagley & Galvão E-5 (1939-1940)1948
SP22 Tapirapé SP22

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

137 The region inhabited by the *Tapirapé* is one of dense tropical forest; yet near the Tapirapé River and parallel to its small tributaries, there are great strips of semiarid savanna country characterized by scrub growth 133 and groups of buriti palms. These plains are flooded during the excessive 132 rains from October to April, and they are arid during the latter part of the dry season (May through September).

241 **Farming.**—The *Tapirapé* make great clearings in the forest for their [324] villages, traveling occasionally to the savanna country for hunting. Their large gardens guarantee them an economy of abundance. They plant several varieties of both sweet and poisonous manioc, four varieties of maize, pumpkins, beans, peppers, cará (*Dioscorea* sp.) and yams, peanuts, squash, several varieties of bananas and beans, cotton, and papaya.

[221] Each year, from June to September, the men clear away the forest for 241 their gardens. Clearing is frequently done individually; frequently also 616 it is done cooperatively by the men's ceremonial moiety groups in a work 476 festival (apačirú). When communally prepared, the large clearings are afterward divided into individual garden lots. Gardens are, thus, generally individual property; now and again, however, a younger man plants [123] together with an older man (his father-in-law) or a close relative. When clearing is done by apačirú, plots are allocated for ceremonial moiety leaders, who use the produce during the harvest feast (kaó) at the end 241 of the rainy season. Vegetation and tree trunks, cut down during the dry season and left to dry, are burned in September. Just after the first rains of October, planting is begun. All crops are planted without order or division within the garden plot, and weeds are never cleared away as [462] the garden grows. All gardening is done by men except the planting and harvesting of peanuts and cotton, which is done entirely by women.

Harvest takes place as the various crops ripen. Maize planted in late October or early November ripens in January; in April and May squash, cará, beans, etc. begin to ripen. Manioc is harvested as needed throughout [422] the year. All food from the gardens is said to belong to the wife once it is brought into the house.

Garden plots are planted for 2 years and then abandoned. The second year only manioc is generally planted in the plot. Yet each year a new plot is cleared from virgin forest and thus each gardener has generally two current garden plots—one newly cleared and a second-year plot planted with manioc. The lack of virgin forest on high ground for garden clear- [361] ings within accessible distance to the village, as well as the fear of the spirits of recent dead, force the *Tapirapé* to move their village site each 4 or 5 years to a new site.

252 Manioc is by far the most important *Tapirapé* crop, as manioc flour is 252 the basis of their diet. Different from other *Tupí* groups, however, the

Tapirapé village which he would have hesitated to relate on home grounds. He told me of adulterous affairs in process and of the growing determination among one group of kinsmen to assassinate Urukumu, the powerful medicine man, because they suspected him of performing death-dealing sorcery.

After two weeks in Furo de Pedra, I found that it would be necessary for Valentim Gomes and me to go to Rio de Janeiro. It was not possible for Champukwi to accompany us and so I arranged for two Brazilian frontiersmen to return him to a point on the Tapirapé River from which he could easily hike to his village in a day. Valentim and I then began our slow trip up the Araguaia River to the motor road and thence to Rio de Janeiro. Two months later, rid of malaria and with a new stock of supplies, we returned to spend the long rainy months from November until the end of May in the Village of the Tapirs. Champukwi was there to welcome us, and he came each day to help repair and enlarge our house. We easily fell into our former friendly relationship, now strengthened by the experience in common of the trip to Furo de Pedra and by the feeling which many anthropologists have shared with the people of their communities—that anyone who returns is an "old friend."

My return to the village that November marked, in a sense, the end of what might be called the first phase of my relationship with Champukwi as friend and as anthropological informant. During the course of at least 200 hours of conversation (many of which may be methodologically dignified as interviews), I had learned much about Champukwi as a person as well as about Tapirapé culture. I knew that as a small boy he had come from Fish Village, where his parents had died, to live in the Village of the Tapirs. He had lived with his father's younger brother, Kamaira, who was the leader of a large household. He even confided to me his boyhood name; Tapirapé change their names several times during their lifetimes and mention of a person's first childhood name, generally that of a fish, an animal, or simply descriptive of some personal characteristic, causes laughter among the audience and considerable embarrassment to the individual. I knew that Champukwi had been married before he took his current wife, and that his first wife had died in childbirth. He revealed that her kinsmen had gossiped that her death was caused by his lack of respect for the food taboos imposed

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115 When the heavy rains of late December and January set in, we
123 were all more or less confined to the village as the rivers and streams
124 rose to flood the savanna. What had been brooks in the tropical
[132] forest became wide streams, difficult, and sometimes dangerous, to
[133] ford. It rained many hours each day. The Tapirapé women and children spent most of the time in their dwellings, and the men and older boys lounged in the men's house. Our house again became a meeting place. And as this was of course an opportune time for interviewing, I joined the men in their club or entertained visitors at home. I began to see more of Champukwi—first, in the men's house and then as he again became a regular visitor at our house. Now, he brought his new (and younger) wife with him. He liked to sit up with us late at night after the other Tapirapé visitors had retired to their dwellings or to the men's house for the night-long sings that are customary during the season of heavy rains. Under the light of our gasoline lamp, we again took up our study of Tapirapé culture. Not once did he mention his period of antagonism except to complain that the Tapirapé gossip too much.

Sometime late in January there began what might be considered the second phase of my relationship with Champukwi. Our friendship was no less intimate than before, but our conversations and more formal interviews were not now as frequent. During the next months, Champukwi became almost my assistant, an entrepreneur of
115 Tapirapé culture. He continued to provide invaluable information,
123 but when I became interested in a subject of which he knew little,
124 he would recommend that I talk to someone else. Though he directed
756 me to Urukumu on the subject of medicine men or shamans, Cham-
[758] pukwi himself related dreams he had heard other shamans tell. He
[759] explained that he did not want to become a shaman himself, for
[883] he had seen grieved relatives beat out the brains of Tapirapé shamans whom they suspected of causing a death by sorcery. He was not certain, he said, whether such shamans had actually performed sorcery;
[882] but he reasoned that any shaman might come to such an end.
[995] Champukwi did have the frequent dreams that are indicative of
[996] one's powers to become a shaman and, in some of his dreams, he saw *anchanga*, the ghosts and supernaturals who are the aids of shamans. He had told only one or two of his kinsmen about this, and he did not want it to be known throughout the village lest there be pressure on him to train for shamanism.